



**Testimony of
Cheri Quickmire
Executive Director
Common Cause in Connecticut
Before the Government Administration and Elections Committee
Monday, February 14, 2011**

Good morning Chairman Slossberg, Chairman Morin and members of the committee. My name is Cheri Quickmire. I am the Executive Director of Common Cause in Connecticut. Common Cause in Connecticut is a nonpartisan, nonprofit citizen organization that works to improve the way Connecticut's government operates. Common Cause has more than 400,000 members around the country and 36 state chapters. We have approximately 7200 members and activists in Connecticut.

I am here to testify in support of the following bills:

SB 938 An Act Concerning Technical and Minor Changes to Elections-Related Statutes
RB 6331 An Act Concerning Technical Amendments to Certain Election-Related Statutes Regarding Tabulators
SB 942 An Act Concerning the Integrity of Elections
House Joint Resolution 88 Resolution Amending the State Constitution to Grant Authority to the General Assembly Regarding Election Administration
SB 941 An Act Implementing No-excuse Absentee Voting Senate Joint Resolution 25 Amending the State Constitution to Allow for No Excuse Absentee Voting
SB 945 An Act Concerning Electronic Filing of Campaign Reports with the State Elections Enforcement Commission.

And in opposition to **HB 6335** An Act Concerning Revisions to Campaign Finance Laws.

SB 938 An Act Concerning Technical and Minor Changes to Elections-Related Statutes and
RB 6331 An Act Concerning Technical Amendments to Certain Election-Related Statutes Regarding Tabulators

These bills make technical and minor corrections to the elections statutes – primarily updating the statutes to reflect the current use of voting tabulator machines.

SB 942 An Act Concerning the Integrity of Elections:

This is an important start to addressing the crisis of confidence in Connecticut elections that was generated in the last election by the debacle in the gubernatorial election in

Bridgeport. We are encouraged that the Secretary of the State is taking the initiative to ensure that this situation is not repeated. We have the expertise and the resources in Connecticut to address the problems identified and to correct them before the 2012 election.

We support the enhanced role of the Secretary of the State in elections.

- We welcome the proposal that the Secretary of the State conduct trainings for election moderators and to ensure that they are appropriately trained and certified – uniformly around the state both for primaries and general elections. The moderator is in charge of the polling place and performs or directs all operations during the voting day. This is a critical function and one which requires serious attention and consistent oversight.
- We support the proposal that the registrar and municipal clerk create an emergency contingency plan for elections in municipalities. Potential natural disaster and mechanical errors should be considered and appropriate plans established. Having them monitored by the Secretary of the State's office is an apt plan and will help ensure that plans are consistent across municipalities.
- Certifying in writing – by the registrars and clerks – to the SOTS that a municipality has the appropriate number of ballots would help prevent a situation of insufficient ballots as occurred in four municipalities in the 2010 elections. Making sure that this occurs not later than thirty-one days prior to an election or twenty-one days prior to a primary and the specification that turnout for each polling place in the municipality for the past four elections of similar nature to the election to be held are appropriate procedures. In a situation where an insufficient number of ballots are ordered, it will be detected in time to remedy the situation without the need for photo-copying of ballots.

House Joint Resolution 88: Resolution Amending the State Constitution to Grant Authority to the General Assembly Regarding Election Administration

SB 941 An Act Implementing No-excuse Absentee Voting

Senate Joint Resolution 25 Amending the State Constitution to Allow for No Excuse Absentee Voting

These three bills address the important issue of allowing eligible voters to cast their votes regardless of whether or not they are able to appear at the polls. This is an important measure to ensure that all eligible voters vote. **House Joint Resolution 88** takes the essential step of amending the State Constitution to allow this change to take place.

SB 945 An Act Concerning Electronic Filing of Campaign Reports with the State Elections Enforcement Commission.



Common Cause has long supported electronic filing of campaign reports with SEEC. The use of web-based programs for preparation and submission of campaign financial statements and any other statements should be mandatory for campaign treasurer of the candidate committee or exploratory committee for each candidate for nomination or election to the office of Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, State Comptroller, State Treasurer and offices of state representative, senate, judge of probate.

We have a national model public financing of elections in this state and it is time to utilize the technology necessary to keep accurate records, provide timely reports and ensure that precise data is kept and reported.

In addition, this procedure would save money and time of staff charged with inputting hand-written filings.

All of the changes in SB 945 should be supported:

- lowering the threshold for mandatory electronic filing from two hundred fifty thousand dollars to four thousand five hundred dollars,
- Making electronic filing provisions applicable to all candidates and;
- Requiring individuals who make or obligate independent expenditures in excess of one thousand dollars file that expenditure electronically.

We do not support HB 6335 An Act Concerning Revisions to Campaign Finance Laws.

Section 7 of this bill is very troubling as it eliminates candidate committee reporting of organizational expenditures articulated in 9-068 (c) (6) and defeats the intended transparency of the statute. From a public disclosure stand point this will mean that the public cannot look to the candidate's SEEC form 30 for the information about organizational expenditures – instead one must look at the individual town committee, LLC or Legislative Caucus committee's reporting.

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